

Series impact

After the expose, the Indian Customs Chief in an interview with the Manorama News admitted that the smugglers are exploiting the lax security arrangements on the border. Later, investigation agencies, such as Customs and DRI, launched special probes to check the gold flow, leading to 25kg gold haul from Thiruvananthapuram airport. Following the Manorama News report, an investigation was launched to find out the possible link between the death of violinist Balabhaskar and gold smuggling gangs. The probe agencies also seized gold weighing a total of 100kg from various places and revealed that they started operations to curb smuggling in the wake of the report. On request, copies of the Manorama News report were shared with the intelligence to help them in investigation. It is during this investigation that the officials found hundreds of kilograms of gold being smuggled through the Thiruvananthapuram airport, exploiting the diplomatic pouch. As suspicions arose about the possible involvement of Kerala chief minister's principal secretary in this, agencies like NIA, Customs, ED, and CBI have also begun probes to unearth the truth.

What we faced during operation(challenge)

We had to stay in Nepal for eight days and often dangerously travel with the carriers to capture the visuals for the gold smuggling story. The team overcame challenges from officials and carriers as we moved ahead with our operation. In the jail and at the check posts, we used the spy cameras to avoid being caught at security checks. During the operation, Malayali smugglers doubted our intention and even thought that we were vigilance officials or rival smuggler gangs, which put our lives in even more risky situations. The military officers and police even threatened to put us in jail after they learnt that we are Indian journalists. After we exposed the names of Kerala-based smuggling mafia heads and details of the smuggling' dens in Dubai, we again faced several threats from the mafia. The gold carriers who helped us unearth the smuggling routes and activities now receive constant threats to lives.